

REPORT  
OF THE  
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

*Communicating a report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, stating the reasons which prevented a compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 11th February, 1846, in relation to overflowed lands.*

DECEMBER 29, 1847.

Read, referred to the Committee on Public Lands, and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, December 23, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor herewith to communicate a report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, dated the 22d instant, in answer to a resolution adopted by the Senate on the 20th instant, requesting to be informed of the reasons which have prevented a compliance by the Secretary of the Treasury with a resolution adopted by the Senate on the 11th February, 1846, in the following terms, to wit: "*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to be caused to be made an examination of the public lands subject to overflow, in the State of Arkansas, by the Mississippi, Arkansas, White, Black, Red and St. Francis rivers, in said State; the quantity of land overflowed by each river; the quantity overflowed by the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers, and lying between, and included within the boundaries formed by those rivers, the Louisiana line, and the highlands westward of the lands so overflowed; and that he report the amount necessary to protect those lands from overflow, together with a plan for that object, at the present session of Congress."

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

McCLINTOCK YOUNG,

*Acting Secretary of the Treasury.*

HON. GEORGE M. DALLAS,

*Vice President of the United States,*

*and President of the Senate.*

GENERAL LAND OFFICE, *December 22, 1847.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the resolution of the Senate of the 20th instant, requesting the Secretary of the Treasury "to inform the Senate of the reasons which have prevented his compliance with a resolution adopted by the Senate the 11th February, 1846, at the 1st session of the 29th Congress," in the following words, to wit: "*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to cause to be made an examination of the public lands, subject to overflow, in the State of Arkansas, by the Mississippi, Arkansas, White, Black, Red and St. Francis rivers, in said State; the quantity of land overflowed by each river; the quantity overflowed by the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers, and lying between, and included within, the boundaries formed by those rivers, the Louisiana line, and the highlands westward of the lands so overflowed; and that he report the amount necessary to protect those lands from overflow, together with a plan for that object, at the present session of Congress;" and in accordance with your direction have the honor to report:

That the resolution of 11th February, 1846, above mentioned, was referred by you to this office on the 12th February, 1846, with instructions "to obtain from the surveyor general of Arkansas, and submit to your department such information as that officer may be able to furnish on the several points of inquiry contained in that resolution;" and that it was "desirable that the information should be obtained as soon as practicable."

In accordance with those instructions, a communication was addressed to the surveyor general of Arkansas, on the 14th February, 1846, containing a copy of the resolution of the Senate, with the substance of your instructions, and requesting him to forward to this office "as speedily as possible a report of all the facts and information within his reach, on the several inquiries made by the resolution, that it may be laid before the Secretary at an early day."

To this communication the surveyor general has not responded; and as the resolution required a report at the session at which it was adopted, it was consequently not in the power of this office to furnish it.

I beg leave to suggest, however, that to enable the department to furnish a satisfactory response to that resolution, it would be necessary to have a topographical survey made by experienced engineers of the country watered by those streams, showing the elevation of their banks with reference to the bodies of water contained in each at the highest stage; the extent of embankment required to prevent their overflow at the various points now inundated along their entire length; and the sources from whence the materials could be procured to make those embankments, and the facilities for transporting them.

The ordinary linear surveys are only required by law to give "the true situation of all mines, salt licks, salt springs, and mill seats, which shall come to the knowledge of deputies; all water

courses over which the lines they run may pass, and also the quantity of the lands;" and as those surveys do not generally furnish any other information, it will be perceived that they do not contain the material to enable this office to furnish satisfactory answers to the inquiries contained in the resolution above mentioned.

The resolution of the 20th inst. is herewith returned.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

RICHARD M. YOUNG,  
*Commissioner.*

Hon. R. J. WALKER,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

